

# Basic Guidelines for Responding to Process Items (Categories 1 – 6)

The purpose of “Process Items” is to diagnose your organization’s *most important* processes—the ones that contribute most to your organization’s performance improvement and key outcomes or performance results. Diagnosis and feedback depend heavily on the content and completeness of your responses. For this reason, it is important to respond to the criteria by providing your *key* process information.

<p><b>Answering “How” questions</b></p>	<p><b>Most of the questions under “Process Items” are “How” questions. Responses should outline your key process information that addresses approach, deployment, learning, and integration (ADLI):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Approach:</b> Approach refers to the processes used to address “Process Item” requirements. Elements of a process include inputs, steps (related activities), timeframes, outputs, end user, standards, key measures to evaluate the process and improvement to the process over time. Show that your approaches are systematic. Systematic approaches are repeatable and use data and information to enable learning. In other words, approaches are systematic if they build in the opportunity for evaluation, improvement, innovation, and knowledge sharing, thereby permitting a gain in maturity.</li> <li>• <b>Deployment:</b> Deployment refers to the extent (depth and breadth) to which an approach is applied in addressing “Process Items.” Deployment information should summarize how your approaches are implemented in different parts of your organization. Deployment can be shown compactly by using tables.</li> <li>• <b>Learning:</b> Learning refers to both personal and organizational development. Processes should include evaluation and improvement cycles, as well as the potential for breakthrough change. Process improvements should be shared with other appropriate units of the organization to enable organizational learning.</li> <li>• <b>Integration:</b> Integration means alignment and harmonization among processes, mission, plans, measures, actions, and results that generate organizational effectiveness and efficiencies.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Answering “What” questions</b></p>	<p><b>Some of the questions under the “Process Items” are “what” questions. These can be further divided into two types of “what” questions:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Questions requesting basic information on key processes and how they work: Although it is helpful to include <i>who</i> performs the work, just stating <i>who</i> does not permit meaningful diagnosis or feedback. Try to respond with a fairly detailed description of a step-by-step process or with a detailed flowchart. Also, including an example or two helps to clarify a flowchart or process description.</li> <li>2. Questions requesting information on key findings, plans, objectives, goals, or measures: These questions set the context for showing “alignment” and “integration” in your performance management system. For example, when you identify key strategic objectives, your action plans, human resource plans, some of your performance measures, and some results reported in Category 7 are expected to relate to the stated strategic objectives.</li> </ol>

## Other Guidelines:

- **Respond completely and truthfully to questions under each Item.** Missing information may be interpreted as a gap in your performance management system.
- **Cross-reference when appropriate.** As much as possible, the response to questions under each “Item” should be self-contained. However, responses to different Items also should be mutually reinforcing. It is then appropriate to refer to the other responses rather than repeat information. You can cross-reference information if it will help enhance your response to a particular item.
- **Use a compact format.** Make the best use of the maximum number of pages permitted. Be creative as much as possible. Use flowcharts, tables, and “bullets” as needed to present information concisely.
- **Use data to support a statement.** If you make claims in the “Process Items” regarding performance levels, be prepared to back them up in Category 7: Results. For example, if a statement such as “we strive to be a world class organization” is made, examiners may expect to see comparisons of performance measures against global competitors.
- **Eliminate anything that is just taking up space.** Don’t fill your application with fluff. If you need to do more research, go ahead and research further. Delete any unnecessary or contradictory information.

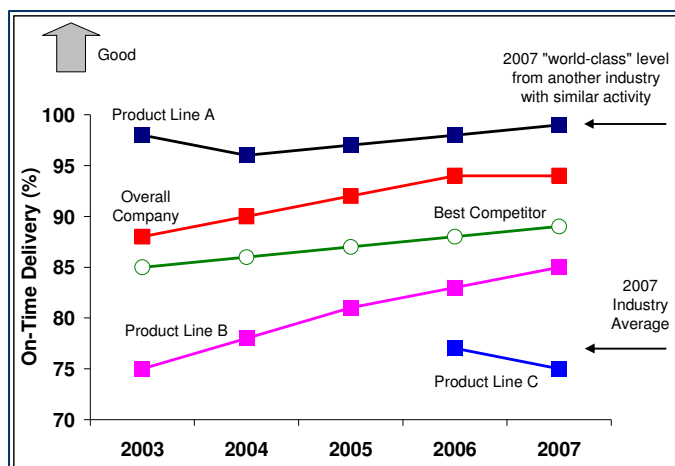
## Basic Guidelines for Responding to Results Items (Category 7)

- Focus on the most critical organizational performance results.** Results reported should cover the most important requirements for your organization's success, highlighted in your Organizational Profile and in the Strategic Planning, Customer and Market Focus, Workforce Focus, and Process Management Categories.
- There are four key requirements for effective reporting of results data (LeTCI):**

<b><u>Levels</u></b>	Levels refer to your current level of performance. Performance levels should be reported on a meaningful measurement scale.
<b><u>Trends</u></b>	Trends show directions of results, rates of change, and the extent of deployment. Include trend data covering actual periods for tracking trends. No minimum period of time is specified for trend data. However, a minimum of three historical data points generally is needed to ascertain a trend. Trends might span five or more years for some results. Trends should represent historic and current performance and not rely on projected (future) performance. Time intervals between data points should be meaningful for the specific measure(s) reported. For important results, new data should be included even if trends and comparisons are not yet well established.
<b><u>Comparisons</u></b>	Comparisons refer to your performance relative to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriate comparisons, such as competitors or organizations similar to yours</li> <li>Benchmarks or industry leaders</li> </ol>
<b><u>Integration</u></b>	Integration refers to the extent to which: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your results measures (often through segmentation) address important customer, product and service, market, process, and action plan performance requirements identified in your Organization Profile and in "Process Items"</li> <li>Your results include valid indicators of future performance</li> <li>Your results are harmonized across processes and work units to support organization-wide goals</li> </ol>

- Use a compact format—graphs and tables.** Many results can be reported compactly by using graphs and tables. Graphs and tables should be labeled for easy interpretation. Results over time or compared with others should be presented in a way, such as using ratios, that takes into account size factors.
- Incorporate the results into the body of the text.** Discussion of results and the results themselves should be close together in an application. *Trends that show a significant beneficial or adverse change should be explained.*
- Use figure numbers that correspond to items.** For example, the third figure for Item 7.1 would be Figure 7.1-3. (See the example in the figure on this page.)

Figure 7.1-3 On-Time Delivery



In the Organizational Profile, the organization has indicated on-time delivery as a key customer requirement. The graph illustrates a number of characteristics of clear and effective results reporting:

- A figure number is provided for reference to the graph in the text
- Both axes and units of measure are clearly labeled
- Trend lines report data for a key customer requirement (on-time delivery)
- Results are presented for several years
- An arrow indicates that an upward trend is good for this measure
- Appropriate comparisons are shown clearly
- Results are segmented by three product lines